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**Maimonides: The 13 Principles and the Resurrection of the Dead**

“Commentary on the Mishnah Torah”

Philosopher: Moses Maimonides

Authored By: Rabbi Shmuel Boteach

The *Thirteen Articles of Faith* are recomposed interpretations of Jewish law about divinity, morale and rebirth. Moses Maimonides composed these articles in his commentary on the Torah. He focused on the essential orders of Jewish religion. Maimonides described his articles as “the fundamental truths of our religion and its very foundations” (Boteach, 2). In this document, he mainly emphasized the belief of the resurrection of the dead. He claimed that resurrection of the dead was particularly important because “there is neither Jewish faith nor any attachment to the Jewish faith, for an individual who does not believe in this” (Boteach, 2). The goal for any person truly dedicated to Judaism was to become resurrected, which would only occur if they were to entirely follow the *Thirteen Articles of Faith*. In other words, resurrection was the reward of total devotion.

His work targeted the people who followed Jewish faith and followed the laws of the Mishnah Torah. This was because he believed that it was difficult to understand the original Torah. He wanted it to be accessible and clear by all who were faithful. Today, his audience would remain the same. Boteach explained that to this day, it is “custom of many congregations to recite the *Thirteen Articles*…every day after the morning prayers in the synagogue” (Boteach, 1). Maimonides Principles’ were continuously followed throughout the years. The document showed that society at the time depended on religion for an explanation of the world around them. Maimonides’ role in society was to blend science and religion together and create a balance. Thus, the world would also be explained from a scientific point of view. However, the social hierarchy put religious followers on top, hindering the spread of scientific perspectives. It was important that society believed in “divine omniscience and providence” (Boteach, 1). The people who denied these laws were at the bottom. It was a structure based on virtue and morale.

Maimonides *Thirteen Articles* of Jewish faith state that it was crucial to understand that G-d’s power was “perfect and absolute” (Boteach, 1). Maimonides composed the *Thirteen Articles* to give Jewish people an incentive to follow the laws, to reach resurrection after death. He wrote:

“Concerning this, there has never been heard any disagreement in our nation, nor does it have any [allegorical] interpretation [other than his literal meaning]. Nor is it permissible to rely upon any individual who believes otherwise.”

If they did not believe in this “cardinal” article, they did not have any connection to Judaism (Boteach, 3). He received a lot of criticism for this piece of his commentary because he never gave a strong reasoning behind it the way he did for the other articles.

Moses Maimonides wanted to establish stability and virtue through law, therefore he compiled the *Thirteen Articles of Faith*. He concentrated on resurrection to encourage Jewish followers to obey all other twelve laws.

**Bibliography**

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